

Three weeks earlier, the Mexican-born laborer, who came to America half a century ago, received an "Important Notice" from the government warning him that he might lose his \$400 a month of Supplemental Security Income. The reason: Mr. Munoz, though a legal immigrant, wasn't a citizen—and therefore stood to lose his benefits because of welfare overhaul. "They're going to cut me off," he told friends after receiving the letter. "If I had a gun right now, I would kill myself."

FUNDS MAY BE RESTORED

It's difficult to know what causes any suicide, or what other demons might have haunted Mr. Munoz. But in the debate over welfare policy, the laborer's story provides just the sort of powerful anecdote that can affect the course of events in Washington. Ronald Reagan's tales of welfare queens in Cadillacs helped spark the drive that led the government to revise the welfare system last year. And now tales of hard-working immigrants like Mr. Munoz are leading policymakers from both parties to question whether some of those changes went too far.

Leaders of both parties now support restoring some of the funding cut last year from benefits for legal immigrants, although they disagree on how much. Republican legislators, under pressure from GOP governors and worried about the public relations problems that stories like Mr. Munoz's could cause, have already proposed adding back \$2 billion of funding for immigrants over the next two years—mostly for SSI and food stamps. President Clinton and the Democrats are proposing adding back much more—more than \$14 billion over five years. If the White House and Republican leaders are able to reach a budget agreement, it will probably include a compromise on increased immigrant funding somewhere in between.

In Mr. Munoz's case, the sad irony is that he need not have lost his benefits. The law requires immigrants to either become citizens or prove that they have worked 10 years or more in the U.S. to keep their benefits. Mr. Munoz had worked in this country since the late 1940s, and a welfare counselor told him he could obtain an exemption if he could document his employment history. That, however, would have required his patrons to acknowledge that they had employed him against the law, and Mr. Munoz considered it a matter of honor not to betray his former bosses.

"I'd rather die," he told his friend Salvador Aguiere. Lupe Marquez, another friend, explains it this way: "He really loved the patron. He got in his mind that he'd have to put the finger on his patron. That's why he died."

Mr. Munoz, whose nickname was "Nacho," was born in 1921 on a ranch in Colotlan, in the Mexican state of Jalisco, the son of a laborer. He came to the U.S., illegally at first and alone, in the late 1940s. He lived in labor camps and cheap hotels or with friends. He held a string of odd, seasonal jobs—pruning pear trees in the winter, picking olives in the fall, working in a tortilla factory, and doing landscaping and office cleaning at a local radio station. Anselmo Ambriz, who met Mr. Munoz in the fields in 1951, says his friend worked until age 70, sometimes for 10 hours a day.

Whenever he worked, he was dogged by a fear that border police would catch him. Indeed, he was once returned to Mexico but snuck back in soon after. "He thought he was a criminal," says Frank Gonzales, whose family housed Mr. Munoz at various times.

Mr. Munoz developed intense loyalty to his patrons, his employers through the 1980s: Knox LaRue and Arnold Toso. Mr. Munoz worked illegally for both men, but Mr.

LaRue, under an amnesty program passed by Congress in 1996, obtained a green card and a legitimate Social Security number for him in the late '80s. "He was a very nervous little guy," Mr. LaRue recalls of the 5-foot-7 Mr. Munoz, who had bushy gray brows over sad, dark eyes. "He'd been on the lam for 40 years, looking over his shoulder."

CONSIDERED CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Munoz stopped working after 1992 and moved into the Franco Center, a big, concrete building for the elderly poor, where he took a noisy one-bedroom apartment overlooking a freeway. He paid the \$184 monthly rent with his Social Security payment of \$286 and his \$400 of SSI. At some point, he contemplated becoming a citizen; among the possessions in his apartment is a wrinkled, 11-page list of study questions for the exam.

Mr. Munoz never married and had no children. He spoke little English and never visited the cantinas (tavern) with his friends. He had cataract surgery in January, and walked stiffly because of arthritic legs, but friends say he showed no signs of depression.

The trouble, says Mary Serna, a neighbor, "all started with that letter he got." He showed the letter to his friend Mr. Aguiere. "I worked all my life, now they're cutting me off," Mr. Aguiere recalls Mr. Munoz saying.

He paid a visit to a local advocacy group called Concilio, where Susan Casillas offered to help him document his work history. On Monday morning, March 17, he returned unannounced to the Concilio office. Ms. Casillas asked him to return at 1 p.m. Instead, he walked that afternoon down to the railroad track, past a cement and lumber yard, through some weeds and down into the dusty canal bed. He was found bloody but still breathing just after 1 p.m., the time of his appointment at Concilio.

Mr. Munoz was buried in a simple gray coffin in a plot for the indigent in the county cemetery. The police found \$717.40 in the dead man's pocket—the \$1,000 in savings he had recently withdrawn from the Franco Center office, less the price of the gun.●

TRIBUTE TO EVELYN MARCONI FOR BEING AWARDED THE LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

● Mr. SMITH of New Hampshire. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to Evelyn Marconi of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, for being honored with the Lifetime Achievement Award by the Rotary Club of Portsmouth.

Evelyn has been my friend for more than a decade. I can think of no one more deserving of the recognition she is receiving by the Portsmouth Rotary Club.

She has given her life to public and community service. Evelyn has served on the Portsmouth City Council for 10 years, four of those years as assistant mayor. In 1989 she was nominated for the prestigious Norris Cotton Republican of The Year Award.

Evelyn has also been a cornerstone of business in Portsmouth and is known to everyone as she owns and operates the landmark Geno's Coffee Shop. In 1980 former U.S. Senator Gordon Humphrey recognized Evelyn's business leadership and appointed her as a delegate to the Small Business Conference where she participated in the Women in Business and Capital Formation and Retention. She also was a delegate to

the New Hampshire Constitutional Convention.

Evelyn's community involvements range from organizing fundraisers to keeping the local Pierce Island Pool open for the children, to being a member of several foundations, committees and executive boards and serving as the first woman president of the Navy League of the United States.

Among her neighbors Evelyn is known as a compassionate and concerned person who makes chicken soup for the sick, helps out with babysitting and works to secure anonymous donations of food or clothing for the underprivileged. Evelyn has been known to go out in a blizzard to deliver food to shut-ins when the city's "meals on wheels" was canceled due to bad weather.

Evelyn is always willing to take responsibility, whether to organize rides to the cancer treatment center for local patients, giving rides on election day to any voter, chairing committees or helping people in need. Whatever she commits to, she always does an outstanding job.

Mr. President, Evelyn has dedicated her time, talent and energy to serving the residents of Portsmouth in an exemplary way. I am proud to know Evelyn, and to honor her outstanding community commitment, which is so important to the future and prosperity of Portsmouth. We are indeed indebted to Evelyn for her efforts in business, public service and community dedication. Congratulations to my friend, Evelyn Marconi, for this distinguished recognition. I am honored to represent her in the U.S. Senate.●

THE THEME IS FREEDOM: RECONSIDERING U.S.-SINO RELATIONS

● Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, no one did more to bring peace and prosperity in our time than our 40th President, Ronald Reagan. President Reagan's economic and foreign policies gave us the longest peacetime expansion in our history and made the world safe again for democracy. But more than that, Ronald Reagan called us to our highest and best: we never spoke with more certainty or sat taller in the saddle than when Ronald Reagan was riding point.

In his farewell address, Reagan told a wonderful story, a story of a refugee and an American sailor. In the early eighties, the U.S.S. *Midway* was patrolling the South China Sea when the crew happened upon a small craft, a decrepit little boat crammed with refugees trying to make their way to America. The *Midway's* captain sent a small launch to bring the ship to safety. And as they made their way toward the tiny vessel, a refugee glimpsed a crewman on deck and called out, "Hello, American sailor. Hello freedom man."

It was, as Reagan noted, "a small moment with a big meaning." Throughout our history, America has